

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING
OF A CHANGE(PCT Rule 92bis.1 and
Administrative Instructions, Section 422)

To:

SHIMODA, Yo-ichiro
Meisan Tameike Building
1-12, Akasaka 1-chome
Minato-ku
Tokyo 107-0052
JAPON

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 28 March 2001 (28.03.01)	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION
Applicant's or agent's file reference WO746NSG	
International application No. PCT/JP00/03608	International filing date (day/month/year) 02 June 2000 (02.06.00)

1. The following indications appeared on record concerning:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the applicant	<input type="checkbox"/> the inventor	<input type="checkbox"/> the agent <input type="checkbox"/> the common representative
Name and Address NIPPON SHEET GLASS CO., LTD. 5-11, Dosho-machi 3-chome Chuo-ku Osaka-shi Osaka 541-0045 Japan	State of Nationality JP	State of Residence JP
	Telephone No.	
	Facsimile No.	
	Teleprinter No.	
2. The International Bureau hereby notifies the applicant that the following change has been recorded concerning:		
<input type="checkbox"/> the person	<input type="checkbox"/> the name	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the address <input type="checkbox"/> the nationality <input type="checkbox"/> the residence
Name and Address NIPPON SHEET GLASS CO., LTD. 7-28, Kitahama 4-chome Chuo-ku Osaka-shi Osaka 541-0041 Japan	State of Nationality JP	State of Residence JP
	Telephone No.	
	Facsimile No.	
	Teleprinter No.	
3. Further observations, if necessary:		
4. A copy of this notification has been sent to:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the receiving Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the designated Offices concerned	
<input type="checkbox"/> the International Searching Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> the elected Offices concerned	
<input type="checkbox"/> the International Preliminary Examining Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland	Authorized officer Masashi HONDA
Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35	Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING
OF A CHANGE(PCT Rule 92bis.1 and
Administrative Instructions, Section 422)

From: the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

SHIMODA, Yo-ichiro
Meisan Tameike Building
1-12, Akasaka 1-chome
Minato-ku
Tokyo 107-0052
JAPON

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 28 March 2001 (28.03.01)	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION
Applicant's or agent's file reference WO746NSG	
International application No. PCT/JP00/03608	International filing date (day/month/year) 02 June 2000 (02.06.00)

1. The following indications appeared on record concerning:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the applicant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the inventor	<input type="checkbox"/> the agent <input type="checkbox"/> the common representative
Name and Address YOSHIZAWA, Hideo Nippon Sheet Glass Co., Ltd. 5-11, Dosho-machi 3-chome Chuo-ku Osaka-shi Osaka 541-0045 Japan	State of Nationality JP	State of Residence JP
	Telephone No.	
	Facsimile No.	
	Teleprinter No.	
2. The International Bureau hereby notifies the applicant that the following change has been recorded concerning:		
<input type="checkbox"/> the person	<input type="checkbox"/> the name	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the address <input type="checkbox"/> the nationality <input type="checkbox"/> the residence
Name and Address YOSHIZAWA, Hideo Nippon Sheet Glass Co., Ltd. 7-28, Kitahama 4-chome Chuo-ku Osaka-shi Osaka 541-0041 Japan	State of Nationality JP	State of Residence JP
	Telephone No.	
	Facsimile No.	
	Teleprinter No.	
3. Further observations, if necessary:		
4. A copy of this notification has been sent to:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the receiving Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the designated Offices concerned	
<input type="checkbox"/> the International Searching Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> the elected Offices concerned	
<input type="checkbox"/> the International Preliminary Examining Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland	Authorized officer Masashi HONDA
Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35	Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION

(PCT Rule 61.2)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

Commissioner
 US Department of Commerce
 United States Patent and Trademark
 Office, PCT
 2011 South Clark Place Room
 CP2/5C24
 Arlington, VA 22202
 ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE
 in its capacity as elected Office

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 17 April 2001 (17.04.01)	Applicant's or agent's file reference WO746NSG
International application No. PCT/JP00/03608	Priority date (day/month/year) 23 July 1999 (23.07.99)
International filing date (day/month/year) 02 June 2000 (02.06.00)	
Applicant YOSHIZAWA, Hideo	

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

☒ in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:

16 February 2001 (16.02.01)

☐ in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:2. The election ☒ was☐ was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35	Authorized officer R. Forax Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38
--	---

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference W0746NSG	FOR FURTHER ACTION		see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.
International application No. PCT/JP 00/ 03608	International filing date (day/month/year) 02/06/2000	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) 23/07/1999	
Applicant NIPPON SHEET GLASS CO., LTD. et al.			

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 2 sheets.

☒ It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. Basis of the report

a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

☐ the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing :

☐ contained in the international application in written form.

☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

☐ the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

☐ the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

2. ☐ **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3. ☐ **Unity of invention is lacking** (see Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

☒ the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

☐ the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

☒ the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

☐ the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

☐ as suggested by the applicant.

☐ because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

☒ because this figure better characterizes the invention.

4, 5

☐ None of the figures.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

CT/JP 00/03608

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 B32B17/10 B60J1/17

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 B32B B60J E05F C03B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 96 25580 A (BROSE FAHRZEUGTEILE ;WEBER HORST (DE); HOFMANN GERHARD (DE)) 22 August 1996 (1996-08-22) cited in the application abstract; figures 1-5 page 1, line 1 -page 7, paragraph 2 ---	1-3,7
X	US 5 443 669 A (TUENKER GERHARD) 22 August 1995 (1995-08-22) abstract; figure 8 column 1, line 10 - line 31 ---	1-6
A	US 5 264 058 A (HOAGLAND JOHH C ET AL) 23 November 1993 (1993-11-23) abstract; figure 6 -----	1,4,7



Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

15 August 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

21/08/2000

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
 Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
 Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Beckman, T

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/JP 00/03608

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 9625580	A	22-08-1996	DE 19504781 C	22-08-1996
			BR 9606952 A	28-10-1997
			CN 1174586 A	25-02-1998
			DE 59600385 D	03-09-1998
			EP 0809747 A	03-12-1997
			ES 2122797 T	16-12-1998
			JP 11500796 T	19-01-1999
			US 5946860 A	07-09-1999
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US 5443669	A	22-08-1995	DE 4132652 A	08-04-1993
			AT 151012 T	15-04-1997
			AU 651496 B	21-07-1994
			AU 2539192 A	08-04-1993
			BR 9203824 A	27-04-1993
			CZ 281055 B	12-06-1996
			DE 59208290 D	07-05-1997
			EP 0535474 A	07-04-1993
			ES 2100992 T	01-07-1997
			FI 924346 A	02-04-1993
			JP 2614963 B	28-05-1997
			JP 6064946 A	08-03-1994
			MX 9205512 A	01-07-1993
			PL 170497 B	31-12-1996
			SK 297192 A	06-04-1994
			ZA 9207520 A	26-04-1993
<hr/>				
US 5264058	A	23-11-1993	EP 0655975 A	07-06-1995
			JP 8500545 T	23-01-1996
			WO 9404357 A	03-03-1994
<hr/>				

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

REC'D 24 SEP 2001

WIPO PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference WO746NSG		FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/JP00/03608	International filing date (day/month/year) 02/06/2000	Priority date (day/month/year) 23/07/1999	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC B32B17/10			
Applicant NIPPON SHEET GLASS CO.,LTD. et al.			

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.


2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets, including this cover sheet.

- ☐ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☒ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 16/02/2001	Date of completion of this report 20.09.2001
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer Hindia, E Telephone No. +49 89 2399 8492



INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/JP00/03608

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):

Description, pages:

1-28 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-7 as originally filed

Drawings, sheets:

1/15-15/15 as originally filed

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages:
- ☐ the claims, Nos.:

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/JP00/03608

☐ the drawings, sheets:

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes:	Claims	1-7
	No:	Claims	
Inventive step (IS)	Yes:	Claims	1-7
	No:	Claims	
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes:	Claims	1-7
	No:	Claims	

2. Citations and explanations
see separate sheet

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:
see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/JP00/03608

Item V

Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) PCT with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. The following documents from the International Search Report have been considered for the purposes of this report:

D1 = WO-A-9625580

D2 = US-A-5443669

D1 is also cited in the application.

2. **Novelty**

D1 relates to a barrel-shaped, spherically-curved glass pane, wherein the radii vary in the X-axis direction. The claimed glass pane in claim 1 differs therefrom in that it has an arcuately curved vertical section and a curved lateral section, wherein the vertical section has a single or same radius of curvature at every position of the pane and the lateral section has a single radius of curvature at every position of the pane and the radii of curvature of the vertical and lateral sections are different from each other and not infinite resulting in a bidirectionally curved glass pane which is neither spherical nor cylindrical. D2 relates to a process for producing a laminated glass pane which has a single or double curvature and which is bent at 620°C with the usual equipment resulting in a conventional unidirectionally or bidirectionally curved glass pane. The glass pane in claim 1 is neither disclosed nor suggested in the prior art D2. Therefore, claims 1 to 7 meet the requirements of Article 33 (2) PCT.

3. **Inventive Step**

The problem addressed by the present application is to provide a curved window pane which can be used suitably as a vehicle window pane with improved advantages over the known cylindrically curved, spherically-curved and barrel-shaped window panes. The problem has been solved by the vehicle window pane defined in claims 1 to 7. There are no doubts that the indicated problem has been solved by the claimed pane having regard to the disclosure of the international application. Closest prior art for the present claims is document D1 which relates to vehicle window panes which are different in shape from that of the claimed glass pane as discussed in section 2. above. Although the glass pane of D1 can

be slidably moved along the curved surface thereof as the position of the X-axis is fixed, such sliding movement is not possible when the position of the X-axis is moved. In contrast, the glass pane defined in claim 1 allows sliding movement along a curved surface thereof or sliding movement paths, i.e., the glass pane can be slidably moved while changing the position of the X-axis which is an improvement over the window panes in D1. Therefore, the subject-matter of present claims 1 to 7 involves an inventive step and the claims meet the requirements of Article 33(3) PCT.

4. Present claims 1 to 7 comply with the requirements of Article 33(4) PCT (industrial applicability).

Item VIII

Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

1. Although product claims 1 and 4 have been drafted as separate independent claims, they appear to relate effectively to the same subject-matter and to differ from each other only with regard to the definition of the subject-matter for which protection is sought and in respect of the terminology used for the features of that subject-matter. The aforementioned claims therefore lack conciseness. Moreover, lack of clarity of the claims as a whole arises, since the plurality of independent claims makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine the matter for which protection is sought, and places an undue burden on others seeking to establish the extent of the protection. Hence, claims 1 and 4 do not meet the requirements of Article 6 PCT.

PCT REQUEST

WO746NSG

Original (for SUBMISSION) - printed on 02.06.2000 03:28:15 PM

0	For receiving Office use only	
0-1	International Application No.	
0-2	International Filing Date	
0-3	Name of receiving Office and "PCT International Application"	
0-4	Form - PCT/RO/101 PCT Request	
0-4-1	Prepared using	PCT-EASY Version 2.90 (updated 10.05.2000)
0-5	Petition The undersigned requests that the present international application be processed according to the Patent Cooperation Treaty	
0-6	Receiving Office (specified by the applicant)	Japanese Patent Office (RO/JP)
0-7	Applicant's or agent's file reference	WO746NSG
I	Title of invention	VEHICLE WINDOW PANE AND VEHICLE DOOR STRUCTURE INCORPORATING THE SAME
II	Applicant	
II-1	This person is:	applicant only
II-2	Applicant for	all designated States except US
II-4	Name	NIPPON SHEET GLASS CO., LTD.
II-5	Address:	5-11, Dosho-machi 3-chome, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi,, Osaka 541-0045 Japan
II-6	State of nationality	JP
II-7	State of residence	JP
II-8	Telephone No.	03-5443-9514
II-9	Facsimile No.	03-5443-9567
III-1	Applicant and/or inventor	
III-1-1	This person is:	applicant and inventor
III-1-2	Applicant for	US only
III-1-4	Name (LAST, First)	YOSHIZAWA, Hideo
III-1-5	Address:	c/o Nippon Sheet Glass Co., LTD. , 5-11, Dosho-machi 3-chome, Chuo-ku, Osaka-shi,, Osaka 541-0045 Japan
III-1-6	State of nationality	JP
III-1-7	State of residence	JP



PCT REQUEST

WO746NSG

Original (for SUBMISSION) - printed on 02.06.2000 03:28:15 PM

IV-1	Agent or common representative; or address for correspondence The person identified below is hereby/has been appointed to act on behalf of the applicant(s) before the competent International Authorities as:	agent
IV-1-1	Name (LAST, First)	SHIMODA, Yo-ichiro
IV-1-2	Address:	Meisan Tameike Bldg., 1-12, Akasaka 1-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052 Japan
IV-1-3	Telephone No.	03-3588-8555
IV-1-4	Facsimile No.	03-3588-8558
IV-1-5	e-mail	ysmdp@blue.ocn.ne.jp
V	Designation of States	
V-1	Regional Patent (other kinds of protection or treatment, if any, are specified between parentheses after the designation(s) concerned)	AP: GH GM KE LS MW MZ SD SL SZ TZ UG ZW and any other State which is a Contracting State of the Harare Protocol and of the PCT EA: AM AZ BY KG KZ MD RU TJ TM and any other State which is a Contracting State of the Eurasian Patent Convention and of the PCT EP: AT BE CH&LI CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LU MC NL PT SE and any other State which is a Contracting State of the European Patent Convention and of the PCT OA: BF BJ CF CG CI CM GA GN GW ML MR NE SN TD TG and any other State which is a member State of OAPI and a Contracting State of the PCT
V-2	National Patent (other kinds of protection or treatment, if any, are specified between parentheses after the designation(s) concerned)	AE AG AL AM AT AU AZ BA BB BG BR BY CA CH&LI CN CR CU CZ DE DK DM DZ EE ES FI GB GD GE GH GM HR HU ID IL IN IS JP KE KG KP KR KZ LC LK LR LS LT LU LV MA MD MG MK MN MW MX MZ NO NZ PL PT RO RU SD SE SG SI SK SL TJ TM TR TT TZ UA UG US UZ VN YU ZA ZW

PCT REQUEST

WO746NSG

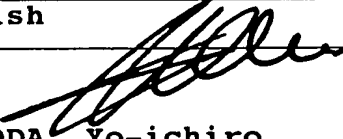
Original (for SUBMISSION) - printed on 02.06.2000 03:28:15 PM

V-5	Precautionary Designation Statement In addition to the designations made under items V-1, V-2 and V-3, the applicant also makes under Rule 4.9(b) all designations which would be permitted under the PCT except any designation(s) of the State(s) indicated under item V-6 below. The applicant declares that those additional designations are subject to confirmation and that any designation which is not confirmed before the expiration of 15 months from the priority date is to be regarded as withdrawn by the applicant at the expiration of that time limit.	
V-6	Exclusion(s) from precautionary designations	NONE
VI-1	Priority claim of earlier national application	
VI-1-1	Filing date	23 July 1999 (23.07.1999)
VI-1-2	Number	Patent Application 11-209956
VI-1-3	Country	JP
VI-2	Priority document request The receiving Office is requested to prepare and transmit to the International Bureau a certified copy of the earlier application(s) identified above as item(s):	VI-1
VII-1	International Searching Authority Chosen	European Patent Office (EPO) (ISA/EP)
VIII	Check list	
VIII-1	Request	number of sheets: 5 electronic file(s) attached: -
VIII-2	Description	28 -
VIII-3	Claims	3 -
VIII-4	Abstract	1 abst.txt
VIII-5	Drawings	15 -
VIII-7	TOTAL	52

PCT REQUEST

WO746NSG

Original (for SUBMISSION) - printed on 02.06.2000 03:28:15 PM

	Accompanying items	paper document(s) attached	electronic file(s) attached
VIII-8	Fee calculation sheet	✓	-
VIII-9	Separate signed power of attorney	✓	-
VIII-10	Copy of general power of attorney	✓	-
VIII-16	PCT-EASY diskette	-	diskette
VIII-17	Other (specified):	Statement	-
VIII-17	Other (specified):	Revenue stamps of transmittal fee for receiving office	-
VIII-17	Other (specified):	Submission of certificate of payment for international fee	-
VIII-17	Other (specified):	Information such as recording of flexible disk	-
VIII-17	Other (specified):	Submission of certificate of payment for search fee	-
VIII-18	Figure of the drawings which should accompany the abstract	4	
VIII-19	Language of filing of the international application	English	
IX-1	Signature of applicant or agent		
IX-1-1	Name (LAST, First)	SHIMODA, Yo-ichiro	

FOR RECEIVING OFFICE USE ONLY

10-1	Date of actual receipt of the purported international application	
10-2	Drawings:	
10-2-1	Received	
10-2-2	Not received	
10-3	Corrected date of actual receipt due to later but timely received papers or drawings completing the purported international application	
10-4	Date of timely receipt of the required corrections under PCT Article 11(2)	
10-5	International Searching Authority	ISA/EP
10-6	Transmittal of search copy delayed until search fee is paid	

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

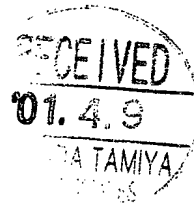
PCT

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

NOTIFICATION OF THE RECORDING
OF A CHANGE(PCT Rule 92bis.1 and
Administrative Instructions, Section 422)

To:

SHIMODA, Yo-ichiro
Meisan Tameike Building
1-12, Akasaka 1-chome
Minato-ku
Tokyo 107-0052
JAPON



Date of mailing (day/month/year) 28 March 2001 (28.03.01)	
Applicant's or agent's file reference WO746NSG	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION
International application No. PCT/JP00/03608	International filing date (day/month/year) 02 June 2000 (02.06.00)

1. The following indications appeared on record concerning:

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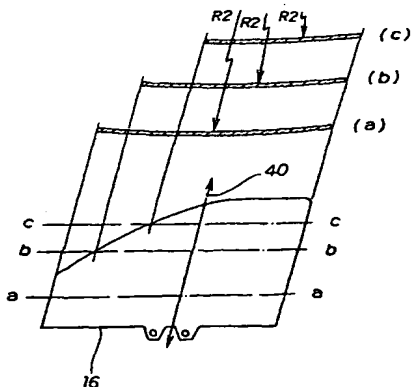
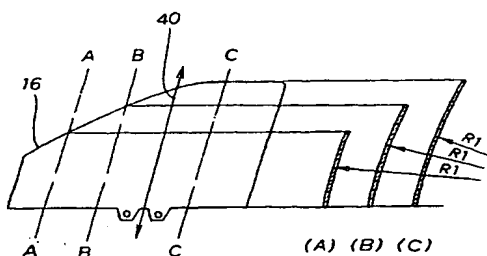


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- (57) Abstract: Vehicle window pane (16) has an arcuately curved vertical section having a single or same radius of curvature (R1) at every position of the pane and a curved lateral section having a single radius of curvature (R2) at every position of the pane. The single radius of curvature (R1) in the curved vertical section and the single radius of curvature (R2) in the curved lateral section are chosen to differ from each other. The vehicle window pane (16) thus shaped constitutes a bidirectionally curved pane, which is neither a spherically curved pane (because the radii of curvature in the vertical and lateral sections are not equal to each other) nor a cylindrically curved pane (because both of the radii of curvature in the vertical and lateral sections are not infinite). With this arrangement, the vehicle window pane can significantly improve an aesthetic appeal of a motor vehicle employing the window pane.
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DESCRIPTION

VEHICLE WINDOW PANE AND
VEHICLE DOOR STRUCTURE INCORPORATING THE SAME

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TECHNICAL FILED

The present invention relates to a vehicle window pane having a novel curved shape with a characteristic combination of different radii of curvature, and a vehicle door structure
10 incorporating such a window pane.

BACKGROUND ART

Various window panes for use in motor vehicles have been proposed to date, one example of which is disclosed, for
15 example, in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publication No. SHO-62-273115 entitled "APPARATUS FOR GUIDING ASCENDING/DESCENDING MOVEMENTS OF AUTOMOBILE WINDOW PANE". The window pane disclosed in this publication is a curved pane. Although not specifically stated in the publication, the disclosed window
20 pane is arcuately curved so as to form part of a cylindrical surface with its portion parallel to a longitudinal axis of the motor vehicle running linearly or substantially linearly. Namely, the disclosed window pane, i.e., "cylindrically-curved window pane", has an arcuately-curved vertical section
25 as viewed from the front of the motor vehicle and a near-linear horizontal or lateral section as viewed from above the motor vehicle. However, an overall aesthetic appeal of the motor vehicle would be significantly improved if the window pane is arcuately curved in the lateral section as well as in

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the vertical section.

Demand for an improved aesthetic appeal may be met by forming the window pane into a spherically curved shape; that is, the spherically curved shape provides an arcuately-curved lateral section as well as an arcuately-curved vertical section. Because of the nature of the spherically curved shape, each and every section taken through the window pane has one and the same radius of curvature. However, for almost every vehicle window pane used today, it is necessary that the vertical section be curved relatively greatly (with a relatively small radius of curvature) toward a roof of the motor vehicle and that the lateral section be slightly curved or be almost like a straight line. Therefore, the spherically-curved window pane, which has a uniform curvature in all directions thereof, particularly, in the directions parallel to and transverse to the longitudinal axis of the motor vehicle, can not readily be put into practical use.

Another type of curved vehicle window pane, analogous in shape to the above-mentioned spherically-curved vehicle window, is proposed, for example, in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publication No. HEI-11-500796 (International Publication No. WO 96/25580) entitled "GUIDE FOR A LOWERABLE SPHERICALLY CURVED WINDOW PANE IN A VEHICLE DOOR". More specifically, the publication discloses a vehicle window pane that is curved to form part of an imaginary barrel-shaped envelope surface (hereinafter referred to simply as a "barrel-shaped window pane"), as shown in Fig. 23 hereof.

Specifically, part (a) of Fig. 23 is a side view of the

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barrel-shaped window pane disclosed in the Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publication No. HEI-11-500796, while part (b) of Fig. 23 shows vertical sections of the disclosed vehicle door window pane taken along lines 31 - 31, 32 - 32 and 33 - 33 of part (a). Because of the barrel shape, the vertical section taken along line 31 - 31, which is closest to the center of the pane, has a greatest radius of curvature. The vertical section taken along line 32 - 32, which is farther from the center of the pane than the line 31 - 31, has a smaller radius of curvature. The vertical section taken along line 33 - 33, which is still farther from the center of the pane than the line 31 - 31, has a yet smaller radius of curvature. That is, the farther from the center of the pane, the smaller becomes the radius of curvature of the vertical section. Namely, where the radius of curvature of the line 31 - 31 vertical section is given as "R31", the radius of curvature of the line 32 - 32 vertical section as "R32", $R32 < R31$. Again, where the radius of curvature of the line 33 - 33 vertical section is given as "R33", $R33 < R32$.

Such a barrel-shaped window pane, which progressively varies in the radius of curvature along the horizontal axis or X-axis as shown, would require a complicated shape in guide rails that serve to guide the window pane relative to the door body, as well as a complicated construction in the door body accommodating the window pane. As a consequence, the manufacturing costs of the guide rails and door body will increase, thereby presenting a bar to practical use of the barrel-shaped window pane.

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The cylindrically-curved window pane, as typically disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publication No. SHO-62-273115, has a drawback of insufficient aesthetic appeal, although it has been popularly used as a sliding vehicle
5 window pane. The spherically-curved and barrel-shaped window panes, on the other hand, have the disadvantage that they are not suitable for practical use.

There has also been a demand for a glass sheet which has a compound curvature and is superior in aesthetic appeal to
10 the above-described spherically-curved and barrel-shaped glass sheets.

An example technique to meet such a demand is disclosed in Japanese Patent Publication No. SHO-49-10331 entitled "METHOD FOR BENDING A GLASS SHEET". In this method, a glass
15 sheet, held at a deformation temperature, is fed along an elongated path of travel on a gas support bed. The path of travel is bent both transversely and longitudinally in an up-and-down direction or vertically. As a result, the glass sheet is bent to have a compound curvature composed of curves
20 extending both transversely and longitudinally of the sheet. Finally, the glass sheet is quenched to keep that compound curvature. However, in the disclosed technique, since the glass sheet is bent while it is floated by gaseous support means, it is quite difficult to provide the glass sheet with
25 as many curves as desired, with precision. Stated otherwise, because it is bent while it is gas-supported, using a bed of a configuration copied from part of a rotary (e.g., a cylinder and a barrel) or a sphere, the glass sheet is

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provided with only curves of poor precision which extend transversely and longitudinally thereof at different radii of curvature.

Another similar technique is proposed in Japanese Patent
5 Laid-Open Publication No. HEI-5-9037 entitled "METHOD AND
APPARATUS FOR BENDING A GLASS SHEET". The proposed technique
provides a glass sheet bent with a compound curvature. That
is, the glass sheet is bent transversely and longitudinally
at different radii of curvature while it is fed along a
10 hearth bed. During feed of the glass sheet, a gas is blown
from below the hearth bed to support the glass sheet in a
floated fashion. Thus, the proposed technique can provide
the glass sheet with only curves of poor precision extending
transversely and longitudinally at two different radii of
15 curvature.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

It is accordingly an object of the present invention to
provide a curved window pane which can be used suitably as a
20 vehicle window pane with superior advantages over the known
cylindrically-curved, spherically-curved and barrel-shaped
window panes and glass sheets with curves of compound
curvature, as well as a vehicle door structure incorporating
such a curved window pane or glass sheet.

25 In order to accomplish the above-mentioned object, the
present invention provides a vehicle window pane for slidable
attachment to a motor vehicle, which is characterized in that
the vehicle window pane has an arcuately curved vertical

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section having, at every position thereof, a same radius of curvature that corresponds to a radius of curvature of a predetermined sliding movement path followed by the vehicle window pane, and a curved lateral section having a same radius of curvature at every position thereof along the sliding movement path.

In the context of the present invention, the "vertical section" of the window pane refers to a section along a plane parallel to the predetermined sliding movement path while the "lateral section" of the window pane refers to a section along a plane intersecting the predetermined sliding movement path substantially at right angles thereto, irrespective of a posture in which the window pane is actually attached to a motor vehicle.

Namely, by forming an arcuately curved vertical section and a curved lateral section, the vehicle window pane, as a whole, constitutes a bidirectionally curved pane, which is neither a spherically curved pane (because the radii of curvature in the vertical and lateral sections are not equal to each other) nor a cylindrically curved pane (because both of the radii of curvature in the vertical and lateral sections are not infinite). By thus choosing the vertical and lateral sectional shapes independently of each other, the inventive vehicle window pane can have an improved aesthetic appeal and the shape of the motor vehicle can be chosen freely as desired without being substantially bound by the window pane.

The radius of curvature in the curved vertical section and the radius of curvature in the curved lateral section are

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different from each other. By thus curving the window pane in both the vertical section and the lateral section with respective single radii of curvature, the facilities for manufacturing the inventive vehicle window pane can be
5 simplified, thereby facilitating successive production of the window panes.

In one implementation of the present invention, the lateral section is curved with a compound curvature composed of a continuous sequence of a plurality of radii of curvature which
10 are different from the radius of curvature in the curved vertical section. By thus curving the lateral section with the compound curvature, the freedom or flexibility in choosing the shape of the vehicle window pane, as well as the overall shape and design of the motor vehicle employing such a window pane,
15 can be greatly increased.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a vehicle window pane for slidable attachment to a motor vehicle, characterized in that the window pane comprises a curved pane having a substantially uniform thickness with a
20 principal surface thereof forming a curved surface, the curved surface being an aggregate of points satisfying the conditions:

(a) when a vector contacting the curved surface at a point on the curved surface is called a tangent vector, a tangent vector
25 having a maximum curvature is called a first tangent vector, and a tangent vector having a minimum curvature is called a second tangent vector, all points on the curved surface have the first tangent vector and the second tangent vector

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intersecting with each other orthogonally;

(b) when a normal-direction vector at a point on the curved surface is called a normal vector and a plane including the normal vector at a selected point on the curved surface and the first tangent vector is called a normal section plane, all curvatures on a curve formed at an intersection where the curved surface and a normal section plane meet accord with the maximum curvature;

(c) the curve formed at the intersection where the curved surface and the normal section plane meet follows a path of sliding movement of the window pane;

(d) the maximum curvature is not equal to the minimum curvature; and

(e) the minimum curvature is not zero.

With this arrangement, it becomes possible to precisely define the shape of the inventive window pane (bidirectionally curved pane). The thus produced vehicle window pane permits narrowing of a pocket opening within a door body, whereby the door body 31 can be made slim.

The minimum curvature may be constant at all points on the curved surface.

Desirably, curvatures extending within an angular range defined by and between the first tangent vector and the second tangent vector are arranged to vary continuously from the maximum curvature to the minimum curvature.

According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a vehicle door structure which comprises: the above-mentioned vehicle window pane; a door body having an

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attachment space for slidable attachment therein of the vehicle window pane and a pocket opening communicating with the attachment space for receiving the vehicle window pane for sliding movement in and out of the pocket opening with a substantially uniform clearance left between an outer peripheral surface of the vehicle window pane and an inner surface of the door body defining the pocket opening; a pair of guide rails formed in opposed inner surfaces of the door body and having a same radius of curvature as the predetermined sliding movement path of the vehicle window pane, so as to guide the sliding movement of the vehicle window pane in and out of the pocket opening relative to the door body; and a window regulator for sliding the vehicle window pane along the guide rails.

The pocket opening formed in the door body has a small cross-sectional area that is quite approximate to the lateral section of the vehicle window pane. The bidirectionally-curved window pane can be readily attached to the conventional door body for free ascending/descending movement with no interference by the inner surface of the door body. Thus, the inventive vehicle door structure can be completed with almost the same component parts as used in the conventional door structures, thereby avoiding an unwanted increase in the manufacturing costs.

25

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Certain preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described in greater detail below, by way of example only,

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with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view schematically showing a general arrangement of a motor vehicle to which are applied the principles of the present invention;

5 Fig. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 2 - 2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a schematic view illustrative of a vehicle door structure in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

10 Fig. 4 is a view illustrative of a vehicle window pane in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, which particularly shows vertical sections of the window pane;

Fig. 5 is a view also illustrative of the vehicle window pane in accordance with the embodiment of the present
15 invention, which particularly shows lateral sections of the window pane;

Fig. 6 is an enlarged perspective view of the vehicle door structure in accordance with the embodiment of the present invention;

20 Fig. 7 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 7 - 7 of Fig. 6;

Figs. 8A and 8B are sectional views showing conventional motor vehicle panes in contradistinction to the vehicle window pane of the present invention;

25 Fig. 9 is a diagram explanatory of basic principles on which the inventive vehicle window pane is manufactured;

Fig. 10 is a view, partly in section, taken along line 10 - 10 of Fig. 9;

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Figs. 11A and 11B are diagrams showing other examples of the pane sliding movement path followed by the window pane;

Fig. 12 is a cross-sectional view showing a modification of the vehicle window pane of Fig. 7;

5 Fig. 13 is a vertical sectional view taken along line 13 - 13 of Fig. 1

Fig. 14 is a vertical sectional view taken along line 14 - 14 of Fig. 1;

10 Fig. 15 is a view showing an example of a motor vehicle provided with two horizontally sliding window panes;

Fig. 16 is a vertical sectional view taken along line 16 - 16 of Fig. 15;

Fig. 17 is a vertical sectional view taken along line 17 - 17 of Fig. 15;

15 Fig. 18 is a view explanatory of the Euler's theorem;

Figs. 19A and 19B are views explanatory of a first phase of a mathematical approach employed in manufacturing the inventive window pane;

20 Figs. 20A and 20B are views explanatory of a second phase of the mathematical approach;

Figs. 21 and 22 are views explanatory of additional features of the mathematical approach; and

Fig. 23 is a view showing a conventional barrel-shaped window pane.

25

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Referring initially to Fig. 1, a motor vehicle 10 includes: a windshield 14 fixed to a forward part of a vehicle bodywork

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13 equipped with front and rear wheels 11 and 12; front door window panes 16 slidably received in front side doors 15 (only one of which is shown); rear door window panes 18 slidably received in rear side doors 17 (only one of which is shown);
5 quarter window panes 19 (only one of which is shown) fixed to a part of the vehicle bodywork 13 rearwardly of the rear door window panes 18; a roof window pane 21 slidably received in a roof window 20 of the vehicle bodywork 13; and a rear window pane 23 (Fig. 2) fixed to a rear part of the vehicle bodywork
10 13. Of these window panes, each of the front and rear door window panes 16 and 18 and roof window pane 21 will hereinafter be sometimes called a "sliding vehicle window pane".

Reference is made next to Fig. 2 showing in particular a manner in which a vehicle compartment is enclosed by the
15 windshield 14, front and rear door window panes 16 and 18, quarter window panes 19 and rear window pane 23. In the motor vehicle 10 as illustrated here, all of these window panes 14, 16, 18, 19 and 23 are arcuately curved so as to be convex outwardly or in an outboard direction.

20 So far, no problem has been encountered in curving the windshield 14, quarter window panes 19 and rear window pane 23 in three dimensions because they are "fixedly-fitted" panes. By contrast, it has been practically impossible to curve the sliding front and rear door window panes 16 and 18 in the
25 longitudinal direction of the vehicle bodywork 13 and yet permit upward/downward sliding movements of the thus-curved window panes 16 and 18. The present invention, however, is arranged to make it possible to curve the sliding front and

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rear door window panes 16 and 18 in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle bodywork 13 in such a manner that the upward/downward sliding movements of the thus-curved panes along the respective door bodies are permitted without involving significant inconveniences. By curving the front and rear door window panes 16 and 18 and quarter window panes 19 with a same radius of curvature in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle bodywork 13, the present invention can markedly improve the outer appearance of these panes and hence the aesthetic appeal of the motor vehicle equipped with these panes.

As shown in Fig. 3, a vehicle door structure in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention includes a door body 31 slidably receiving a door window pane (in this illustrated example, the front door window pane 16), a pair of opposed guide rails 32 and 33 for guiding the sliding upward/downward (i.e., ascending/descending) movements of the door window pane 16 relative to the door body 31. Also received in the door body 31 is a pane raising/lowering mechanism 34 commonly called a "window regulator". Raising/lowering coupler 35 of the window regulator 34 is secured to the door window pane 16 by means of bolts 36. Driving wire 38 is driven via an electric motor 37 so that the door window pane 16 is raised or lowered (moved upward or downward) by the wire 38 via the raising/lowering coupler 35 in a direction of arrow ①. Path of such movements, in the direction of arrow ①, of the door window pane 16 will hereinafter be referred to as a "pane sliding movement path"

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40, for convenience of the following description. Note that arrow ①, and hence the pane sliding movement path 40, is arcuately curved in a direction normal to the plane of the sheet of Fig. 3.

5 Reference is now made to Fig. 4 illustrating the vehicle window pane. More specifically, part (A) of Fig. 4 shows a vertical section of the vehicle window pane (in this illustrated example, the front door window pane 16) taken along line A - A parallel to the pane sliding movement path 40.

10 Similarly, part (B) and part (C) of Fig. 4 show other vertical sections of the vehicle window pane 16 taken along line B - B and line C - C, respectively, which are also parallel to the pane sliding movement path 40. All of these vertical sections of the vehicle window pane 16 have a same, first radius of

15 curvature R1, and this first radius of curvature R1 equals that of the pane sliding movement path 40. Namely, the vertical section of the vehicle window pane 16 has the same first radius of curvature R1 at every position of the window pane 16 (in this case, throughout the length of the window pane 16). In

20 the case where the window pane 16 is employed in a passenger vehicle, the first radius of curvature R1 is chosen to be in a range of 0.5m - 5m.

 In the case where the door window pane 16 as shown in Fig. 4 is employed in the vehicle door structure of Fig. 3, the

25 guide rails 32 and 33 are also arcuately curved with the first radius of curvature R1 in the direction normal to the plane of the sheet of Fig. 3, so that the door window pane 16 is allowed to smoothly slide in the arrow ① direction, i.e., along the

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pane sliding movement path 40.

Turning now to Fig. 5, part (a) thereof 5 shows a cross or lateral section of the vehicle window pane (in this illustrated example, the front door window pane 16) taken along line a - a intersecting the pane sliding movement path 40 substantially at right angles thereto. Similarly, part (b) and part (c) of Fig. 5 show other lateral sections of the vehicle window pane 16 taken along line b - b and line c - c, respectively, which intersect the pane sliding movement path 40 substantially at right angles thereto. All of these lateral sections of the vehicle window pane 16 have a same, second radius of curvature R_2 different from the above-mentioned first radius of curvature R_1 (i.e., $R_2 \neq R_1$). Namely, the lateral section of the vehicle window pane 16 has the second radius of curvature R_2 at every position of the window pane 16 (in this case, throughout the height of the window pane 16). In the case where the window pane 16 is employed in a passenger vehicle, the second radius of curvature R_2 is chosen to be in a range of 5m - 50m. The inventive vehicle window pane 16 thus shaped constitutes a bidirectionally curved pane, which is neither a spherically curved pane (because the second or lateral radius of curvature R_2 is not equal to the first or vertical radius of curvature R_1) nor a cylindrically curved pane (because $R_2 \neq \infty$ and $R_1 \neq \infty$) (either the vertical radius of curvature R_1 or the lateral radius of curvature radius R_2 is ∞ in the case of a cylindrically curved pane).

Reference is now made to Fig. 6 showing in perspective the vehicle door structure in accordance with the preferred

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embodiment, in conjunction with Fig. 7 which is a cross-sectional view taken along line 7 - 7 of Fig. 6. As shown in Fig. 7, the door body 31 has an pocket opening 42 in which the door window pane (in this illustrated example, the front door window pane 16) is fitted with an uniform clearance t left all around the pane 16 between the inner surface of the door body 31 and the outer surface of the pane 16. The pocket opening 42 communicates with a pane attachment space in the door body above the opening and may be formed in a slanted, flat surface.

Because the lateral section of the vehicle window pane 16 has the second radius of curvature R_2 , at every position of the window pane 16 (in this case, throughout the height of the pane 16) as described earlier in relation to Fig. 5, the window pane 16 always remains coincident in profile with the pocket opening 42 when it is being raised (pulled upward relative to the plane of the sheet of Fig. 7). Thus, the clearance t can be of a very small width or cross-sectional area. As a consequence, the bidirectionally-curved window pane 16 received in the door body 31 of Fig. 6 can be smoothly raised or lowered in the arrowed direction through the narrow pocket opening 42.

Figs. 8A and 8B are sectional views showing conventional motor vehicle panes in contradistinction to the above-described motor vehicle window pane of the present invention. More specifically, Fig. 8A illustrates a conventional motor vehicle window pane 101 of poor flatness received in a door body 102. Namely, distortion tends to occur in the conventional vehicle window pane 101 during preceding manufacturing stages; particularly, undesired warps 103 and 104 would persist in

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edges of the pane 101 as shown rather exaggeratedly in the figure. These warps tend to have random shapes beyond human control (i.e., uncontrollable as desired by a user), thereby creating various degrees of curvature in different portions of the manufactured pane. Such a vehicle window pane 101 would considerably wobble or shake in a direction across the thickness thereof, as denoted by phantom line in the figure, when it is being raised or lowered along the inner surface of the door body 102 surrounding the pane 101. To avoid the interference between the undesirably warped window pane 101 and the inner surface of the door body 102, it is necessary to form a sufficiently wide pocket opening 105 in the door body 102. However, the wider the pocket opening 105, the more difficult would become the weather-proofing work etc. of the door structure. Further, the wider pocket opening 105 leads to an increased overall thickness of the door body 102, which would greatly affect the design of the door structure.

More importantly, the random warps 103, 104 inherent in the window pane produced by the conventional method of production would raise serious optical problems. Namely, the random warps 103, 104 would present discontinuous optical characteristics, thereby refracting and distorting light and images transmitted through the window pane 101. Consequently, external views entering through the window pane 101 would look partly distorted to the eyes of a driver or passenger and the window pane 101 would look distorted to the eyes of people outside the motor vehicle such as passers-by. These are the major inconveniences presented by the conventional vehicle window

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pane 101 shown in Fig. 8A.

To provide solutions to those inconveniences, a more sophisticated conventional vehicle window pane 101 is formed into a straight cross-sectional shape with no curvature, so as to be received appropriately in a much narrower pocket opening 106 of the door body.

By contrast, the vehicle window pane 16 of the present invention has a continuous arc-curved shape as set forth above in relation to Figs. 4 and 5 and thus presents no discontinuous optical characteristics that would result in an undesirable distortion of light and images.

Fig. 9 is a diagram explanatory of basic principles on which the vehicle window pane of the present invention is manufactured. Specifically, Fig. 9 shows an example of an apparatus for manufacturing the inventive bidirectionally-curved vehicle window pane which is neither spherically curved nor cylindrically curved. This manufacturing apparatus 50 includes a plurality of curving stations 60 following an exit of a glass-sheet heating furnace 52 provided with feed rollers 51. The curving stations 60, successively arranged in an arc having the radius of curvature R_1 , function to arcuately curve the heated glass sheet to be formed into the window pane 16, across the width thereof, into the first radius of curvature R_1 .

As shown in Fig. 10, each of the curving stations 60 includes a pair of lower and upper flexible shafts 61 and 65 over which are fitted two sets of disks 62 and 66, respectively. The curving station 60 also includes a lower

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rolling section 64 which compulsorily raises or lowers the lower flexible shaft 61 between the adjacent disks 62 by means of lower cylinders 63. The curving station 60 also includes an upper rolling section 68 which compulsorily raises or lowers
5 the upper flexible shaft 65 between the adjacent disks 66 by means of upper cylinders 67. Bearings 69 are also provided at opposite ends of the two flexible shafts 61 and 65.

In each of the thus-constructed curving stations 60, the degree of curvature of the lower flexible shaft 61 can be
10 adjusted, as desired by a user, by controllably operating the lower cylinders 63. By then curving the upper flexible shaft 65 in a similar manner to the lower flexible shaft 61, the glass sheet to be formed into the window pane (in this case, the front door window pane 16) can be arcuately curved into the
15 second radius of curvature R_2 . Thus, the bidirectionally-curved vehicle window pane having the first and second radii of curvature R_1 and R_2 can be manufactured in the manner as described in relation to Figs. 9 and 10.

Where the vehicle window pane is curved bidirectionally in
20 such a way that its vertical section has the first radius of curvature R_1 while its lateral section has the second radius of curvature R_2 , i.e., that not only its vertical section is arcuately curved with a single radius of curvature but also its lateral section is curved with another single radius of
25 curvature, the manufacturing apparatus as shown in Figs. 9 and 10 can be suitably used and readily provides for successive production of the inventive bidirectionally-curved vehicle window panes.

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Reference is made next to Figs. 11A and 11B showing other examples of the pane sliding movement path 40 which the inventive bidirectionally-curved vehicle window pane can follow. The pane sliding movement path 40 shown in Figs. 3 to 5 is linearly tilted relative to the vertical axis of the motor vehicle. However, according to the basic principles of the present invention, the pane sliding movement path 40 is not so limited and may be modified as shown in Figs. 11A and 11B. Namely, Fig. 11A shows a modified pane sliding movement path 40 that is generally in the form of a broken-line or dogleg line, while Fig. 11B shows another modified pane sliding movement path 40 that is generally in the form of a circular arc.

Discussion will be made next as to a modification of the vehicle door structure of Fig. 7, with reference to Fig. 12. More specifically, shown in Fig. 12 is a modified vehicle window pane (in this case, the front door window pane 16) formed into a more complicated lateral section having a combination of radii of curvature R_{21} , R_{22} and R_{23} (e.g., $R_{21} < R_{22} < R_{23}$); such a combination of radii of curvature will be called a "compound curvature". Namely, the modified vehicle window pane 16 of Fig. 12 is characterized in that its vertical section has the single radius of curvature R_1 while its lateral section has a compound curvature composed of a continuous sequence of a plurality of radii of curvature R_{21} , R_{22} , ..., R_n ("n" is an integer greater than one, and $R_{21} \neq R_{22} \neq R_{23} \neq \dots \neq R_{2n}$). By curving the lateral section with the compound curvature, the freedom or flexibility in choosing the shape of the vehicle window pane, as well as the overall

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shape and design of the motor vehicle employing such a window pane, can be greatly increased.

As shown in Fig. 13, the roof window pane 21 is also arcuately curved with the first radius of curvature R1 in the longitudinal direction of the motor vehicle and is slidable rightward in the figure along rails (only one of which is shown) 71.

The roof window pane 21, as shown in Fig. 14, is also arcuately curved with the second radius of curvature R2 in the transverse or widthwise direction of the motor vehicle and is slidable in the direction normal to the plane of the sheet of the figure along rails 71. Namely, the roof window pane 21 as shown in Figs. 13 and 14 is also a bidirectionally-curved vehicle window pane having an improved aesthetic appeal.

Shown in Fig. 15 is an example of a motor vehicle provided with two horizontally sliding window panes 72 and 73, at least one of which (e.g., pane 72) is horizontally slidable relative to the other along the horizontal pane sliding movement path 40 to close or open the window.

Turning now to Fig. 16, there is shown the vertical section of the window pane 73 as viewed in the direction perpendicular to the horizontal pane sliding movement path 40. The illustrated horizontally sliding window pane 73 has the radius of curvature R2, and if the other sliding window pane 72 also has the same radius of curvature R2, then the two window panes 72 and 73 are both allowed to slide in the direction normal to the plane of the sheet of the figure.

As shown in Fig. 17, both of the side horizontally sliding

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window panes 72 and 73 have the radius of curvature R_1 in their lateral sections parallel to the horizontal pane sliding movement path 40.

5 The side horizontally sliding window panes 72 and 73 described above in relation to Figs. 15 to 17 can be very useful when employed in a window structure to be built in a house or other building. Because these side horizontally sliding window panes 72 and 73 are each a bidirectionally-curved pane which has the first radius of curvature R_1 in
10 lateral section and the second radius of curvature R_2 in vertical section and which is therefore neither a spherically curved pane nor a cylindrically curved pane, they are very preferable from the viewpoint of architectural aesthetics.

The present invention will now be described mathematically
15 with reference to Fig. 18 to Fig. 22. The conventional window panes having a compound curvature are configured with poor precision. In contrast, the inventive window pane has a precisely-defined configuration. For precisely defining the configuration of a window pane, a mathematical or geometric
20 approach should be taken.

Reference is now made to Fig. 18 explanatory of the Euler's theorem. Consideration is first given to a point P on a curved surface S shown in the Figure. Note that although the term "curved surface" just used should precisely be "surface" from
25 a mathematical point of view, it is so used throughout this specification for the sake of distinction between that and other terms accompanied by "surface". Next, a unit normal vector n of the curved surface S at point P and a unit tangent

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vector X of the curved surface S at point P are given. The curved surface S is sectioned by a plane H_m including the vector X and vector n . A cut face or curve, arising in the plane H_m , of the curved surface S is referenced c . Curvature of the curve c at point P is represented by k . Particularly, the curvature in the direction of the unit tangent vector X is represented by kx . When unit tangent vectors X of the curved surface S at point P are given in various directions and where kx is not a constant, two unit tangent vectors X_1 , X_2 arise with the following properties:

(1) kx_1 is a maximum value of kx while kx_2 is a minimum value of kx

(2) X_1 and X_2 intersect with each other orthogonally

(3) when an angle formed by X and X_1 is θ , $kx = kx_1 \cos^2 \theta + kx_2 \sin^2 \theta$

This is what is called the Euler's theorem.

Reference is made next to Figs. 19A and 19B which are explanatory of a first phase of a mathematical approach employed in manufacturing the inventive window pane. In Fig. 19A, designated by reference numeral 16 is a door window pane to be fitted in the vehicle door (see Fig. 1) vertically slidably. The window pane 16 is a curved pane having a substantially uniform thickness with a principal plane thereof forming the curved surface S . For attachment to the door body 31 or the guide rails 32, 33 (see Fig. 3), the door window pane 16 might be required to be altered in thickness at an edge thereof. The door window pane 16 with the edge thus altered in thickness is also deemed to be one of uniform thickness as far as a major part of the pane has a uniform thickness.

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Similarly, for attachment to the door body 31 or the guide rails 32, 33, the window pane 16 may require to be altered in shape at its edge, in which instance its principal surface may exclude the shape-altered edge.

5 Referring again to Fig. 19A, vector contacting the curved surface S at point P on the surface S is called a tangent vector X. As can be appreciated from Fig. 19B, there are an infinite number of tangent vectors X relative to the point P. These vectors can be expressed by X_n ($n=1, 2, 3, \dots$). Of these
10 vectors X_n , one having a maximum radius of curvature may be called a first tangent vector X_1 while another having a minimum radius of curvature may be called a second tangent vector X_2 . In the door window pane 16, the first and second tangent vectors X_1 , X_2 intersect with each other orthogonally.

15 Reference is made next to Figs. 20A and 20B which are explanatory of a second phase of the mathematical approach. In Fig. 20A, assume that a normal-direction vector at point P on the curved surface S is called a normal vector n and that a plane including a normal vector n at a selected point P on the
20 curved surface S and the first tangent vector X is called a normal section plane H_m . A point of intersection where the curved surface S and the normal section plane H_m meet draws a curve. The drawn curve is called c. In the inventive door window pane 16, all curvatures on the curve c are made to
25 accord with the maximum curvature. As can be readily appreciated, there is an infinite number of curves c on the curved surface S. Thus, an infinite number of curves c are made to exist in accordance with rules described with reference

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to Fig. 20B.

Designated by reference numeral 40 in Fig. 20B is a sliding movement path followed by the window pane. In the inventive window pane 16, assume that an infinite number of curves is represented by c_n , ($n=1, 2, \dots, n$). Then, all curves $c_1, c_2, \dots, c_{n-1}, c_n$ are made to follow the sliding movement path 40 of the window pane.

One having a maximum curvature equal to a minimum curvature is a spherical surface. Because a spherical surface is irrelevant to the present invention, the maximum curvature is made not to accord with the minimum curvature. One having a minimum curvature of zero is a cylindrical surface. Again, since a cylindrical surface is irrelevant to the present invention, the minimum curvature is set to be other than zero.

As explained above in relation to Figs. 19A, 19B, 20A and 20B, the present invention provides a vehicle window pane for slidable attachment to a motor vehicle, characterized in that the window pane comprises a curved pane having a substantially uniform thickness with a principal surface thereof forming a curved surface, the curved surface being an aggregate of points satisfying the conditions:

(a) when a vector contacting the curved surface at a point on the curved surface is called a tangent vector, a tangent vector having a maximum curvature is called a first tangent vector, and a tangent vector having a minimum curvature is called a second tangent vector, all points on the curved surface have the first tangent vector and the second tangent vector

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intersecting with each other orthogonally;

(b) when a normal-direction vector at a point on the curved surface is called a normal vector and a plane including the normal vector at a selected point on the curved surface and the first tangent vector is called a normal section plane, all curvatures on a curve formed at an intersection where the curved surface and a normal section plane meet accord with the maximum curvature;

(c) the curve formed at the intersection where the curved surface and the normal section plane meet follows a path of sliding movement of the window pane;

(d) the maximum curvature is not equal to the minimum curvature; and

(e) the minimum curvature is not zero.

15 This makes it possible to precisely define the shape of the inventive window pane (bidirectionally curved pane). The thus produced vehicle window pane permits narrowing of the pocket opening 42 of Fig. 7, whereby the door body 31 can be made slim.

20 Referring now to Fig. 21, the second tangent vector (tangent vector X_2 of Fig. 19B) has a minimum curvature. Each curve dn ($n=1, 2, \dots, n$), which orthogonally intersects with a curve cn that can be regarded as an aggregate of first tangent vectors, is an aggregate of second tangent vectors.

25 Herein, all curves dn ($n=1, 2, \dots, n$) are set to have a minimum curvature. Namely, the minimum curvature remains constant at all points on the curved surface. By arranging all the curves dn ($n=1, 2, \dots, n$) to have the same curvature, it becomes

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possible to simplify a mold for molding the window pane and hence to reduce the cost of mold production. When rolls are used for such molding, the shape of the rolls can be determined with ease.

5 As shown in Fig. 22, an angular region or range ϕ is defined by and between a curve c_n corresponding to the first tangent vector and a curve d_n corresponding to the second tangent vector. Curvatures of curves e_m , ($m=1, 2, \dots, n$) extending within the angular range are arranged to vary
10 continuously from the maximum curvature to the minimum curvature. At this time, since e_1 lies over c_n , 1 is not included in m .

The partially-poorly-shaped conventional window pane inherently includes or is likely to have, in a transition from
15 the maximum radius of curvature R_1 to the minimum radius of curvature R_2 , portions where radii of curvature suddenly vary. Those portions present problems of optical distortion and hence product quality deterioration. In contrast, by arranging curvatures extending within an angular range defined by and
20 between the first and second tangent vectors to vary from the maximum curvature to the minimum curvature as in the present invention, a high-quality window pane (bidirectionally curved pane) can be provided which is free from optical problems.

It may be readily appreciated by skilled artisans that
25 the inventive vehicle window pane may be applied to other than the side door windows of the motor vehicle, such as the roof window. Furthermore, the inventive window pane may also be applied to windows in trains, yachts, boats, ships, etc.

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INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The present invention provides a curved window pane which can be used suitably as a vehicle window pane with superior advantages over the known cylindrically-curved, spherically-curved and barrel-shaped window panes and glass sheets with curves of compound curvature. The invention also provides a vehicle door structure incorporating such a curved window pane.

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CLAIMS

1. A vehicle window pane for slidable attachment to a motor vehicle,

5 characterized in that said vehicle window pane has an arcuately curved vertical section having, at every position thereof, a same radius of curvature that corresponds to a radius of curvature of a predetermined sliding movement path followed by said vehicle window pane, and a curved lateral
10 section having a same radius of curvature at every position thereof, wherein said vertical section is a section along a plane parallel to the predetermined sliding movement path while said lateral section is a section along a plane intersecting the predetermined sliding movement path
15 substantially at right angles thereto.

2. A vehicle window pane as recited in claim 1, wherein the radius of curvature in the curved vertical section and the radius of curvature in the curved lateral section are
20 different from each other.

3. A vehicle window pane as recited in claim 1, wherein the lateral section is curved with a compound curvature composed of a continuous sequence of a plurality of radii of curvature
25 which are different from the radius of curvature in the curved vertical section.

4. A vehicle window pane for slidable attachment to a motor

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vehicle, characterized in that said window pane comprises a curved pane having a substantially uniform thickness with a principal surface thereof forming a curved surface, said curved surface being an aggregate of points satisfying the

5 conditions:

- (a) when a vector contacting said curved surface at a point on said curved surface is called a tangent vector, a tangent vector having a maximum curvature is called a first tangent vector, and a tangent vector having a minimum curvature is
- 10 called a second tangent vector, all points on said curved surface have the first tangent vector and the second tangent vector intersecting with each other orthogonally;
- (b) when a normal-direction vector at a point on said curved surface is called a normal vector and a plane including the
- 15 normal vector at a selected point on said curved surface and the first tangent vector is called a normal section plane, all curvatures on a curve formed at an intersection where said curved surface and a normal section plane meet accord with the maximum curvature;
- 20 (c) said curve formed at said intersection where said curved surface and said normal section plane meet follows a path of sliding movement of said window pane;
- (d) the maximum curvature is not equal to the minimum curvature; and
- 25 (e) the minimum curvature is not zero.

5. A vehicle window pane as recited in claim 4, wherein the minimum curvature is constant at all points on said curved

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surface.

6. A vehicle window pane as recited in claim 4, wherein curvatures extending within an angular range defined by and
5 between the first tangent vector and the second tangent vector vary continuously from the maximum curvature to the minimum curvature.

7. A vehicle door structure comprising:

10 a vehicle window pane as recited in any one of the preceding claims;

a door body having an attachment space for slidable attachment therein of said vehicle window pane and a pocket opening communicating with said attachment space for
15 receiving said vehicle window pane for sliding movement in and out of said pocket opening with a substantially uniform clearance left between an outer peripheral surface of said vehicle window pane and an inner surface of said door body defining said pocket opening;

20 a pair of guide rails formed in opposed inner surfaces of said door body and having a same radius of curvature as the predetermined sliding movement path of said vehicle window pane, so as to guide the sliding movement of said vehicle window pane in and out of said pocket opening
25 relative to said door body; and

a window regulator for sliding said vehicle window pane along said guide rails.

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FIG.1

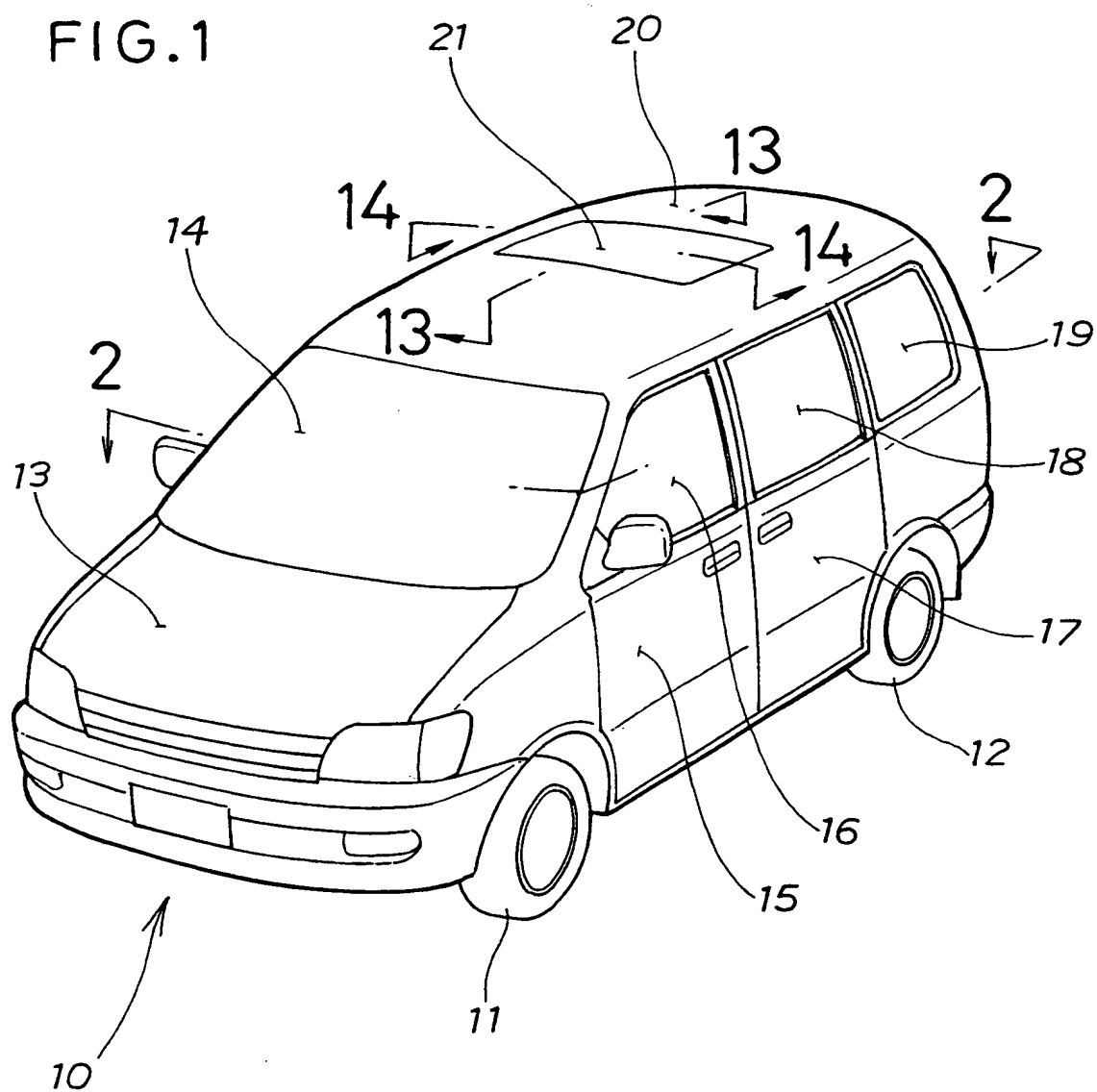


FIG. 2

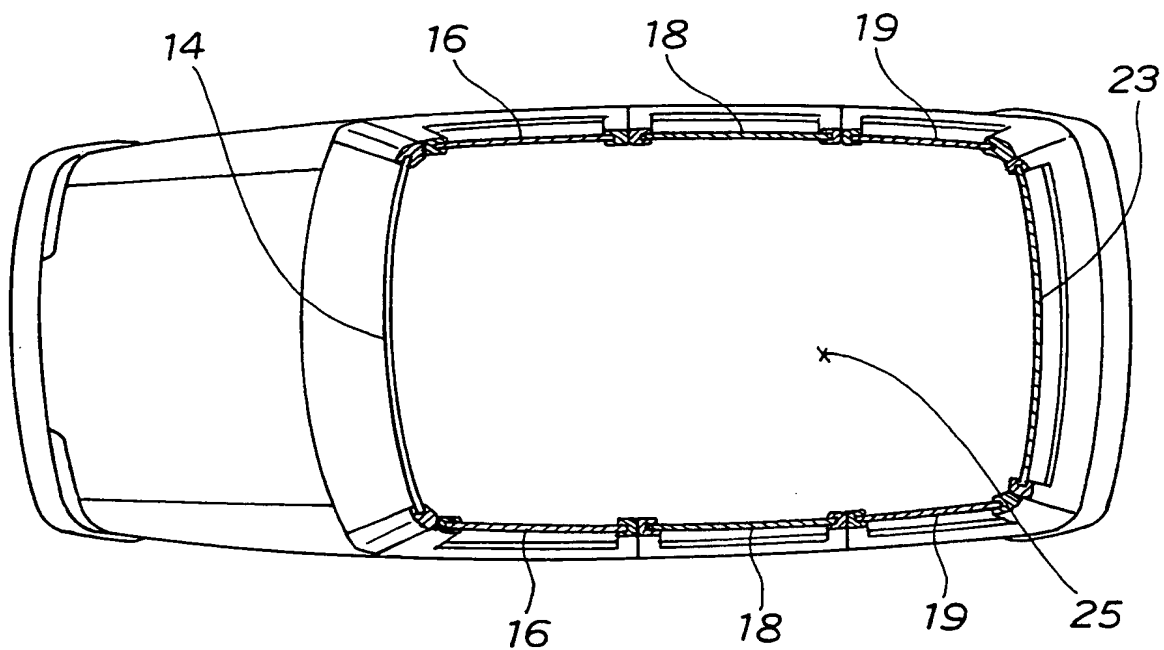


FIG. 3

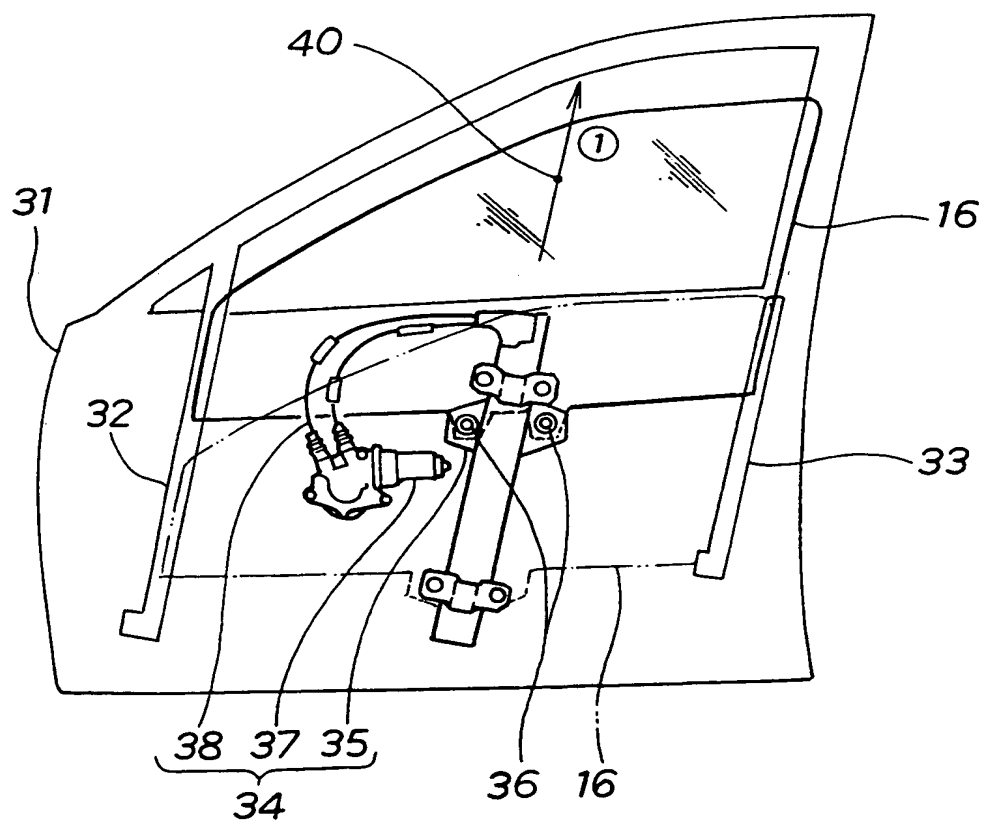


FIG. 4

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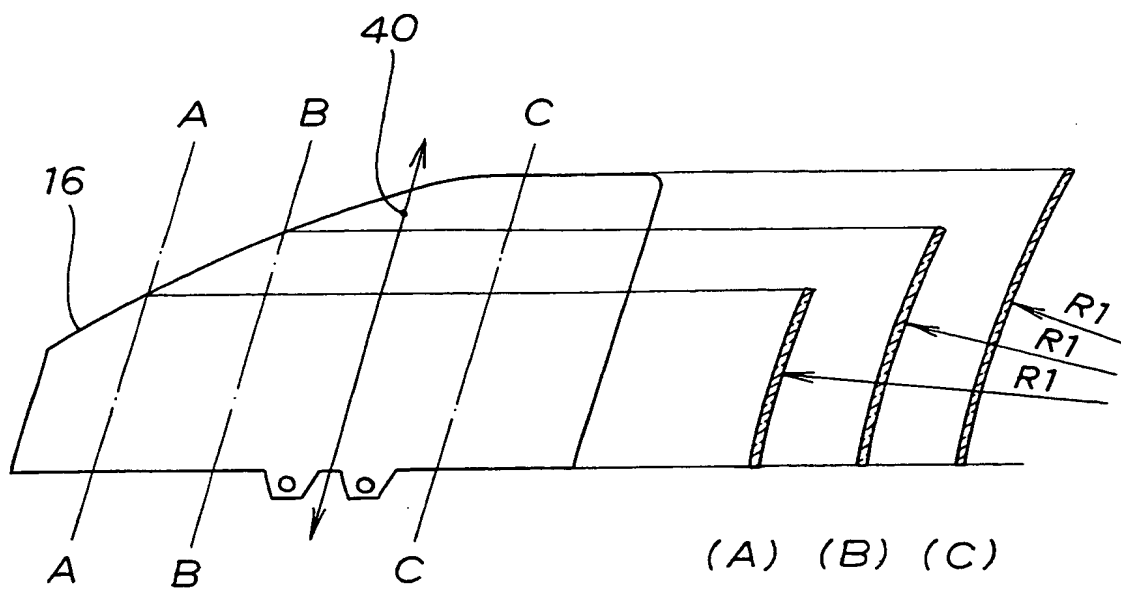
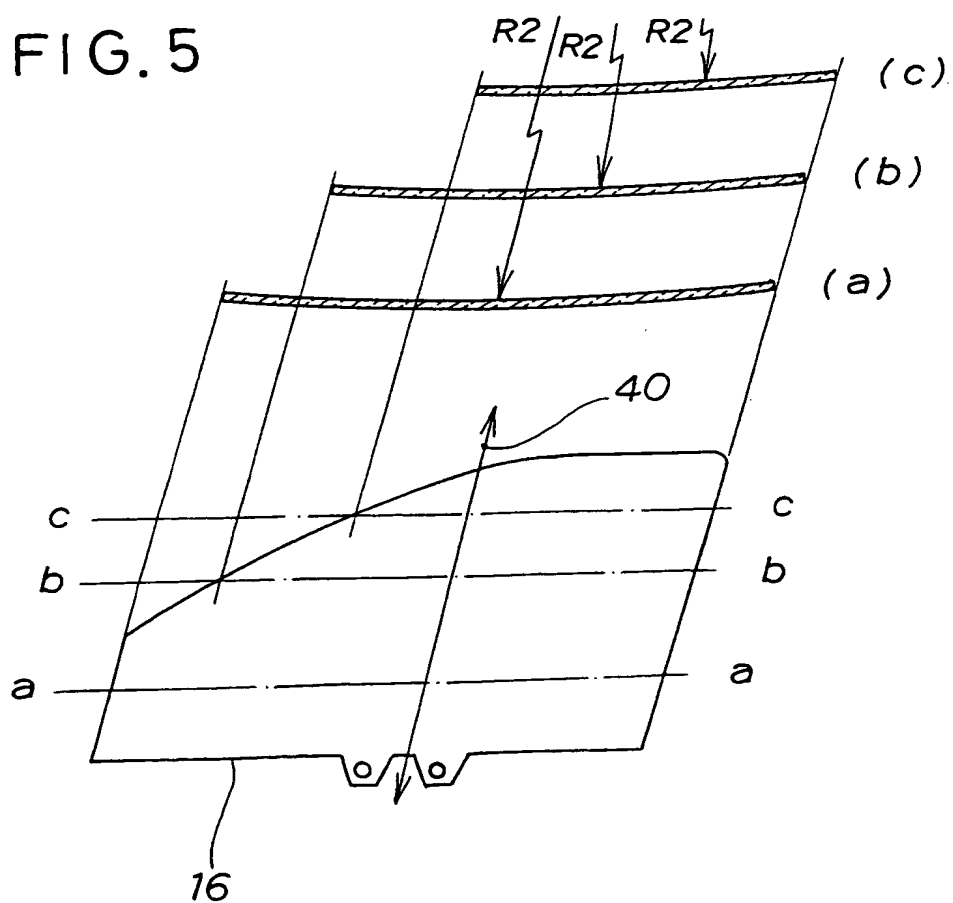
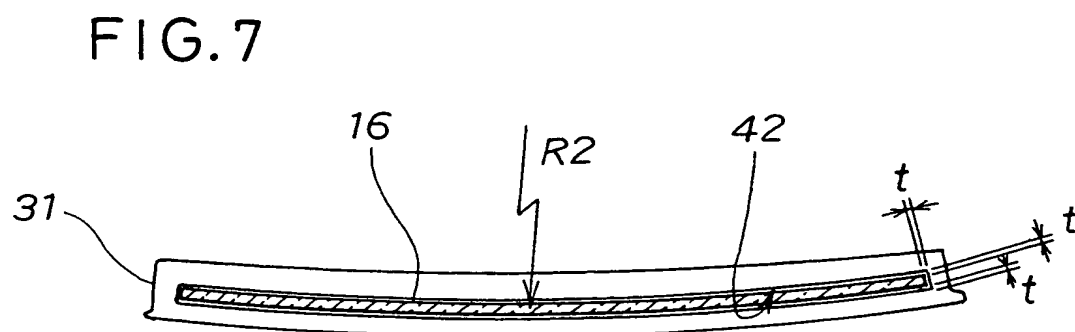
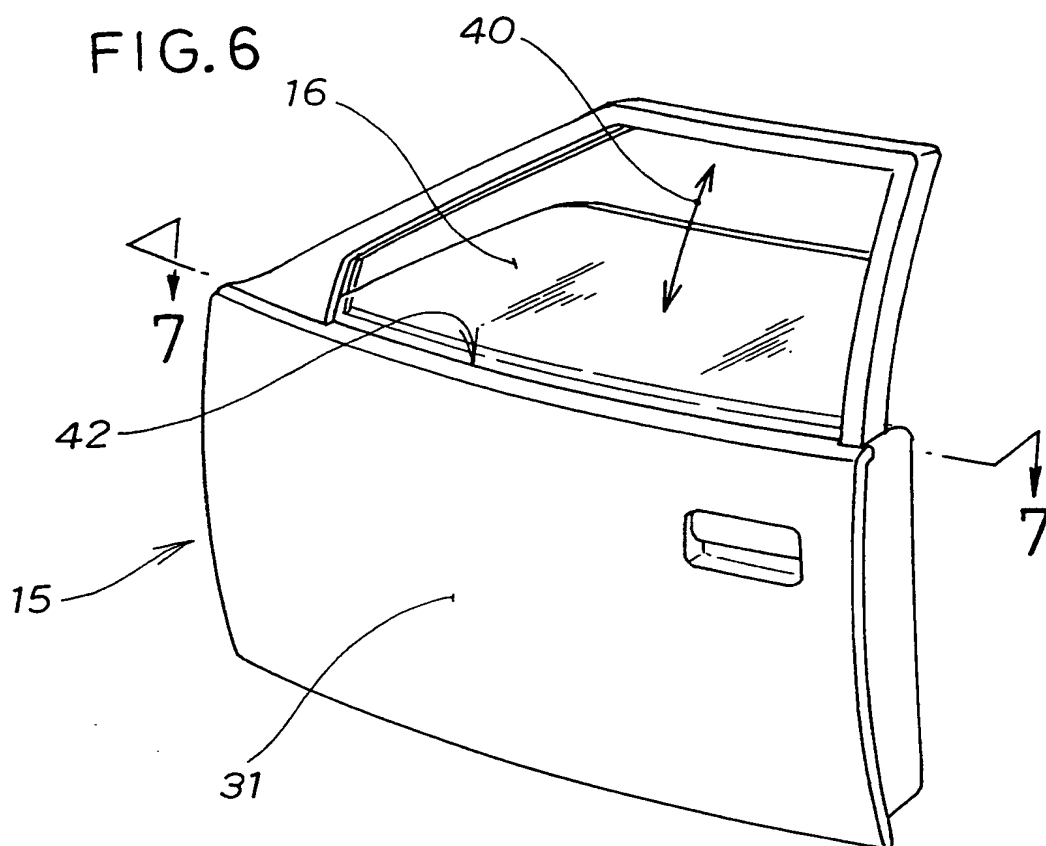


FIG. 5



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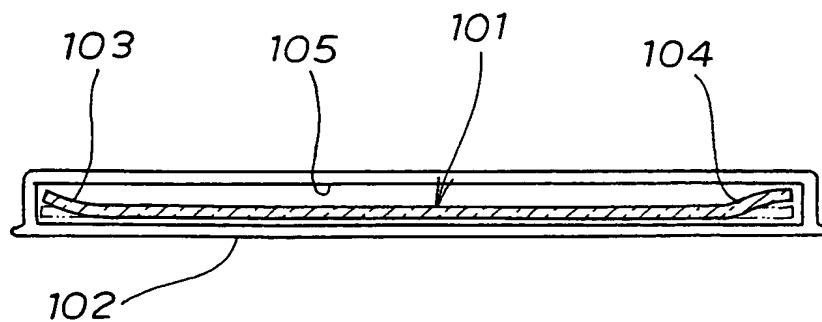


FIG. 8A
(PRIOR ART)

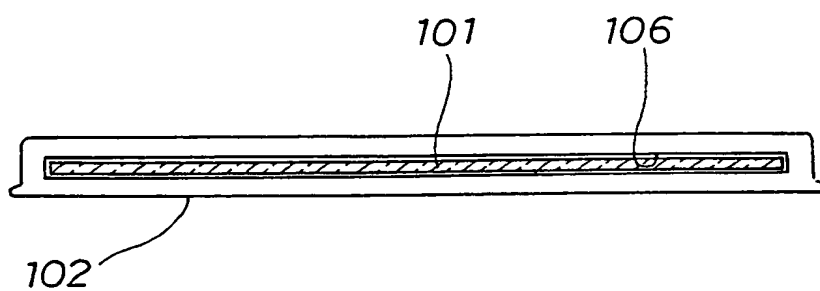


FIG. 8B
(PRIOR ART)

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FIG.9

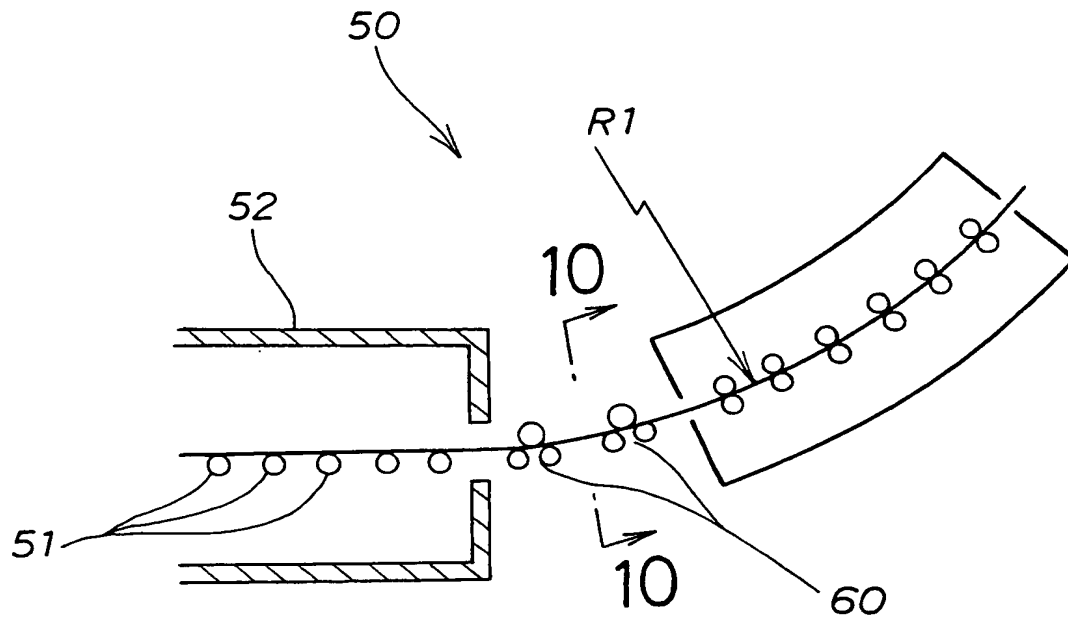
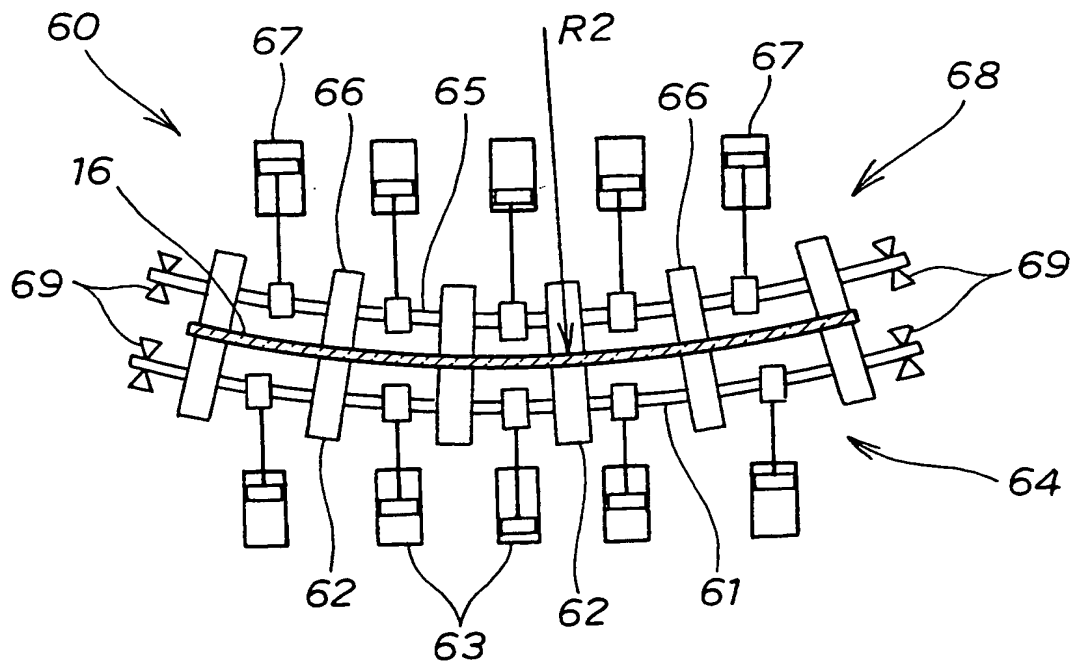


FIG.10



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FIG.11A

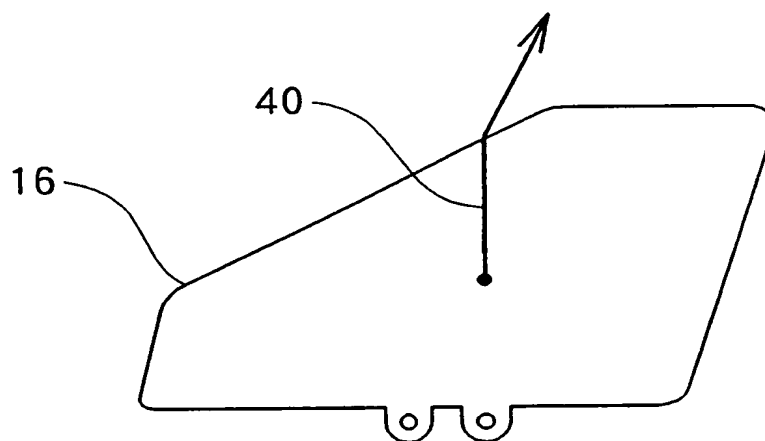


FIG.11B

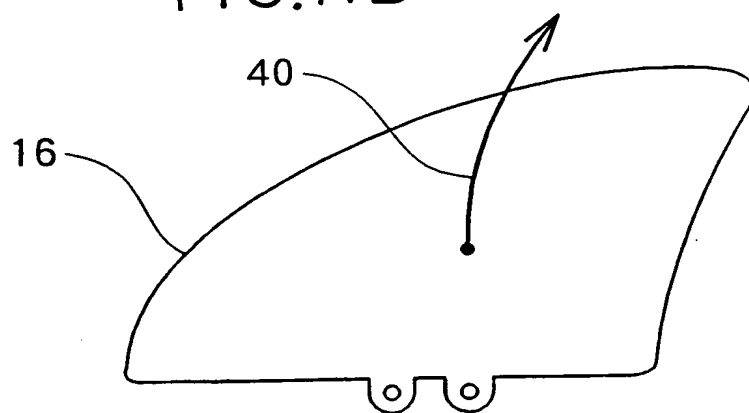
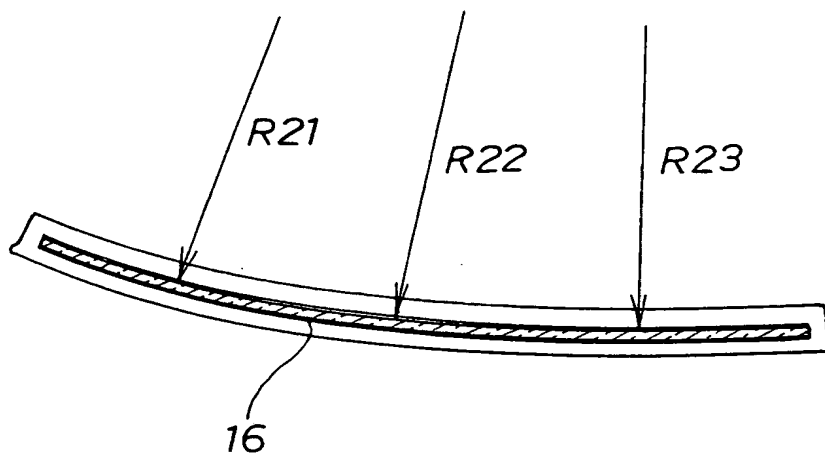


FIG. 12



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FIG.13

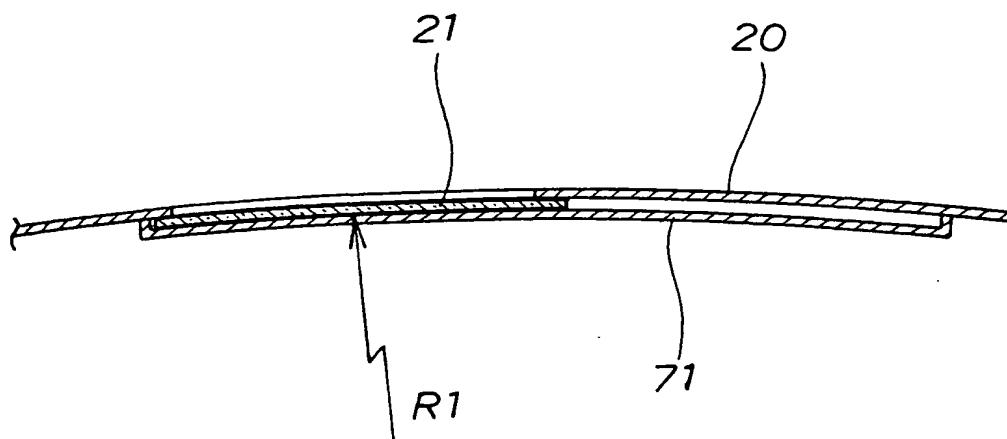


FIG.14

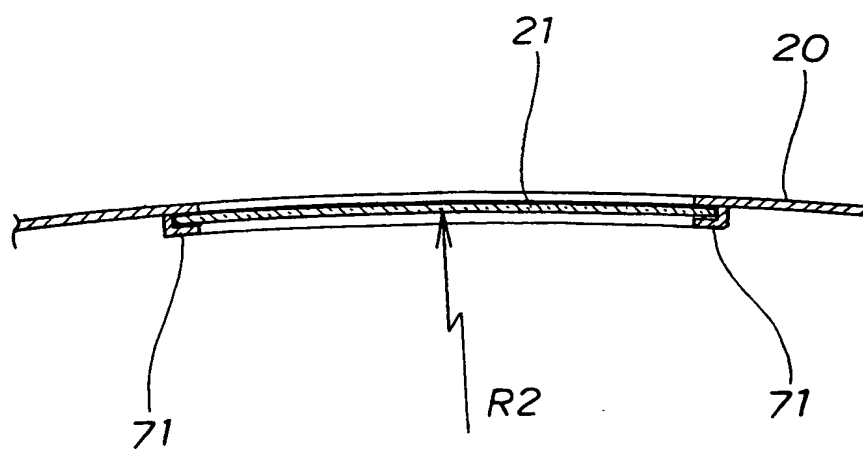


FIG.15

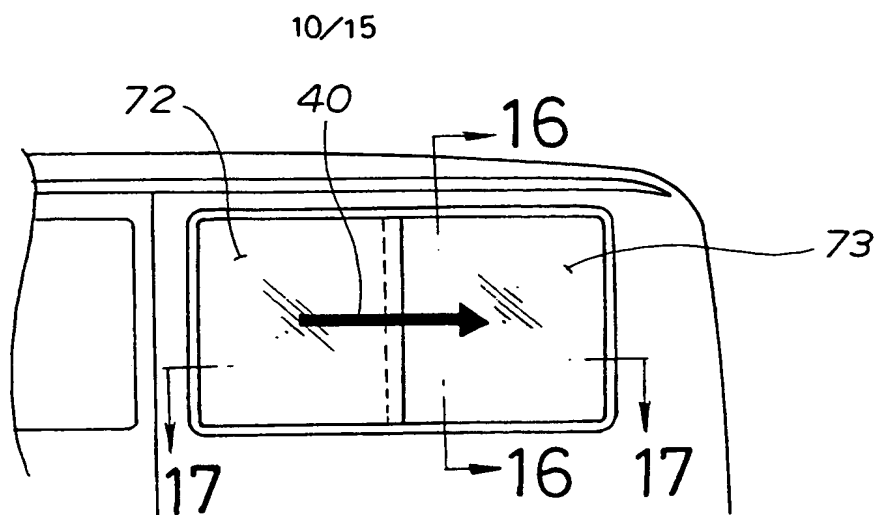


FIG.16

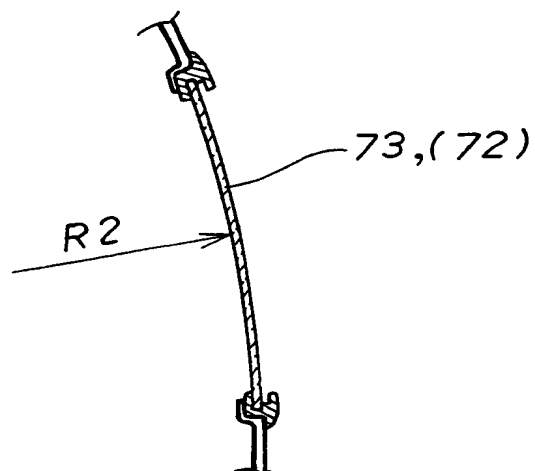


FIG.17

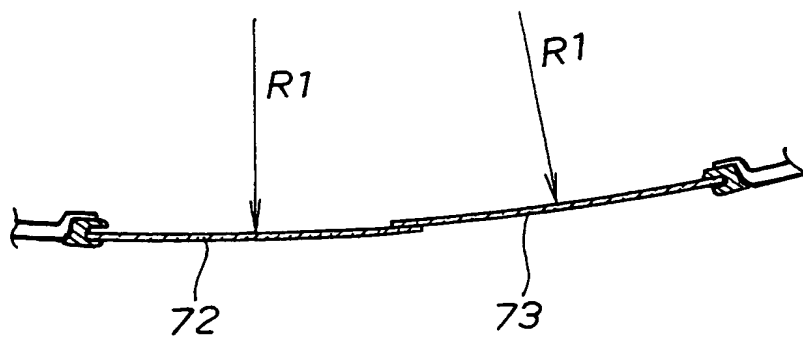


FIG.18

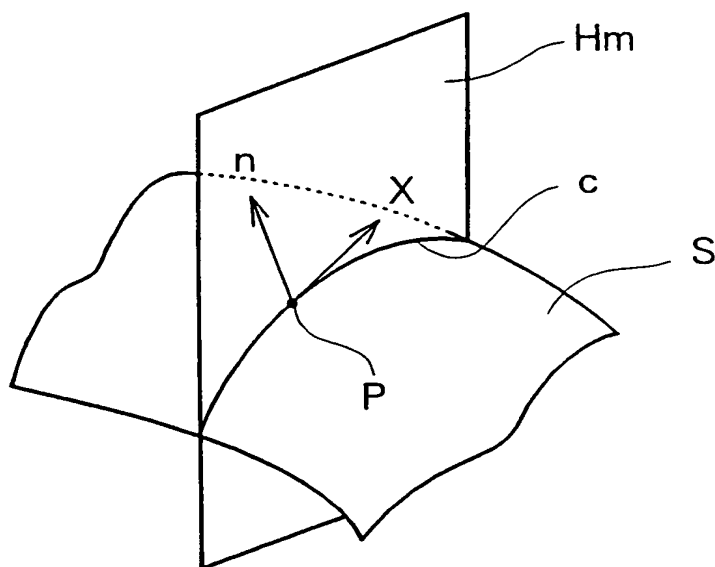


FIG.19A

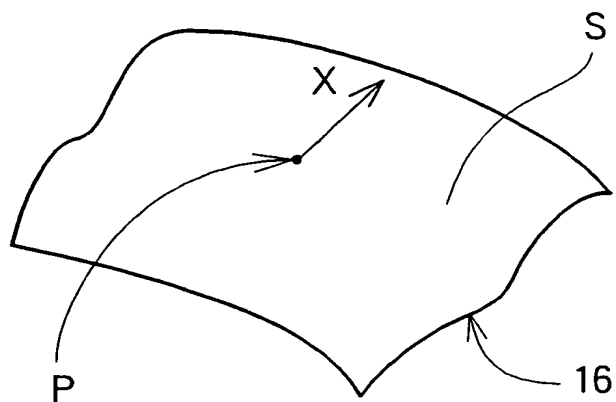


FIG.19B

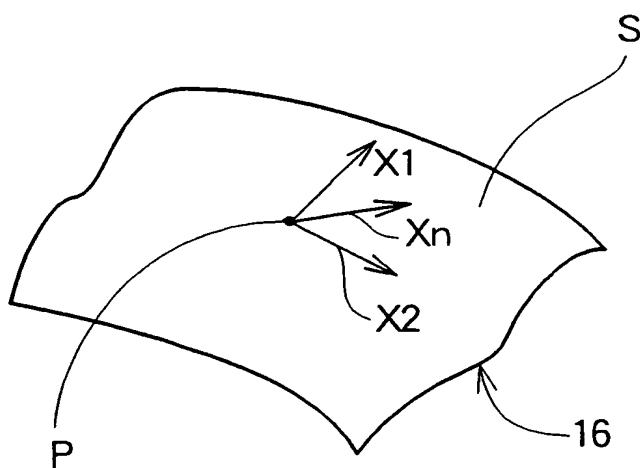


FIG.20A

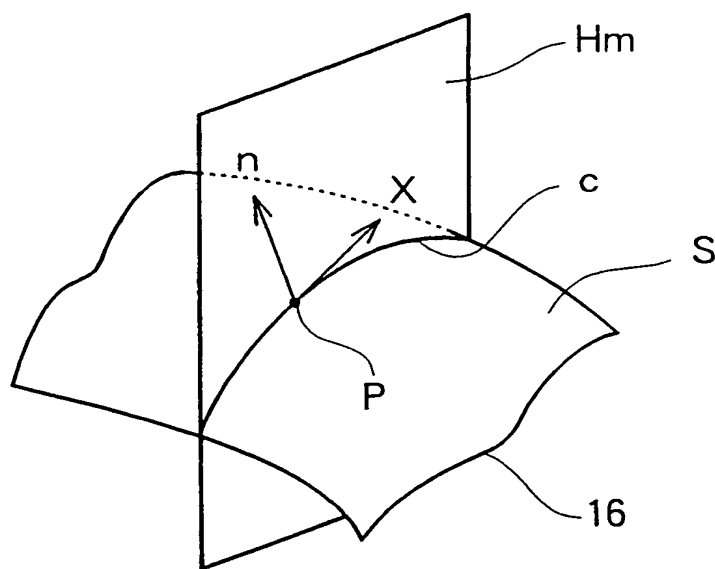


FIG.20B

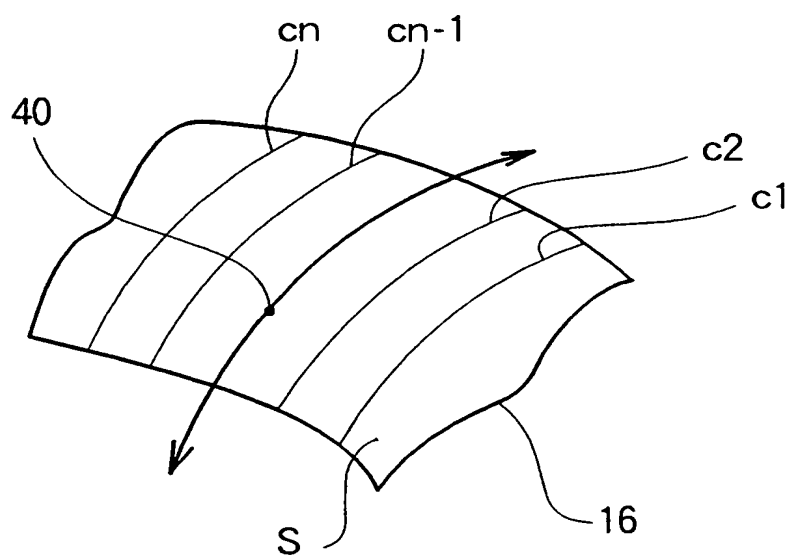


FIG.21

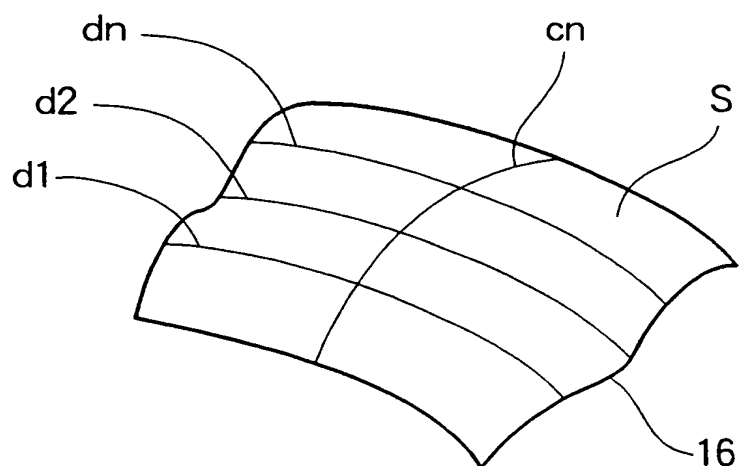


FIG.22

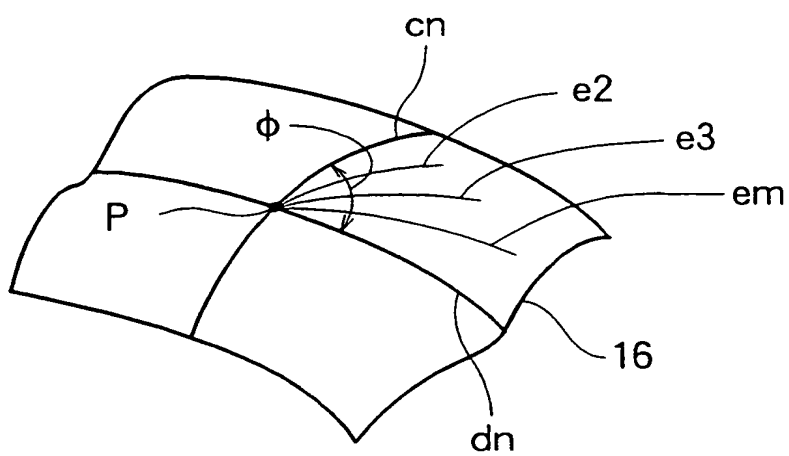
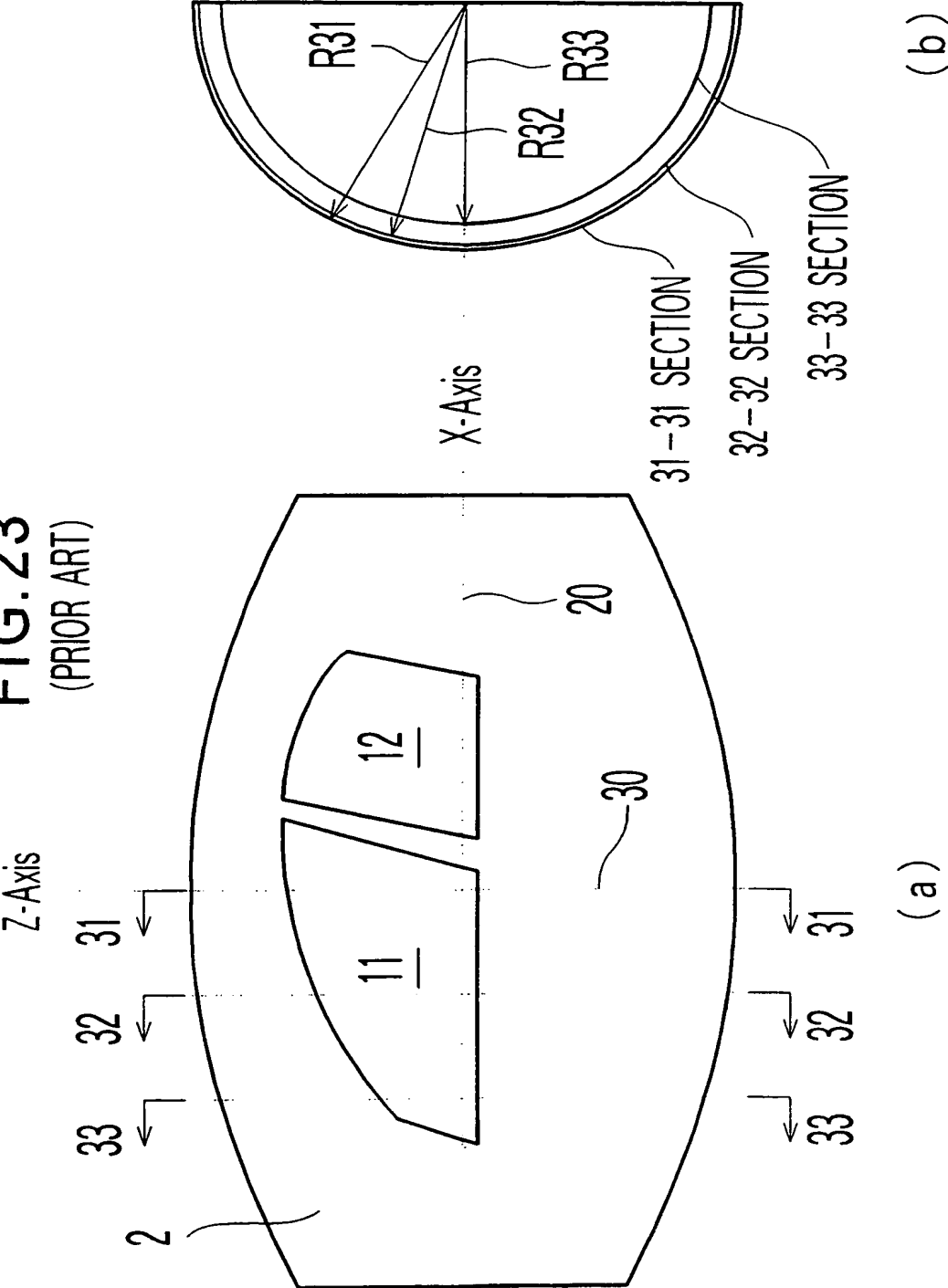


FIG. 23
(PRIOR ART)



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Original Application No

PCT/JP 00/03608

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 B32B17/10 B60J1/17

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 B32B B60J E05F C03B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 96 25580 A (BROSE FAHRZEUGTEILE ;WEBER HORST (DE); HOFMANN GERHARD (DE)) 22 August 1996 (1996-08-22) cited in the application abstract; figures 1-5 page 1, line 1 -page 7, paragraph 2	1-3,7
X	US 5 443 669 A (TUNCKER GERHARD) 22 August 1995 (1995-08-22) abstract; figure 8 column 1, line 10 - line 31	1-6
A	US 5 264 058 A (HOAGLAND JOHH C ET AL) 23 November 1993 (1993-11-23) abstract; figure 6	1,4,7

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

15 August 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

21/08/2000

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 Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Beckman, T

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/JP 00/03608

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